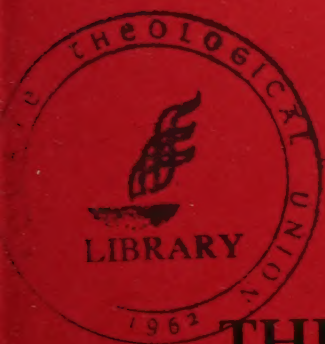


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THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY

THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY is a training monastery and retreat centre following the Sōtō Zen Buddhist tradition. The Priory is affiliated with Shasta Abbey, whose Spiritual Director and Abbess is Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, O.B.C. Shasta Abbey, the headquarters of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives of the Sōtō Zen Church, is located in Mount Shasta, California. The monks of Throssel Hole Priory are disciples of Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett and follow her teaching.

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THE JOURNAL OF THROSSEL HOLE PRIORY is published as a service to all those who are seriously interested in the practice of Buddhism. Through the pages of the Journal, members and friends of the Priory are able to share their understanding and experience of Zen training; we welcome and encourage letters from our readers. Opinions expressed in each article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Abbot, the Editor, or Throssel Hole Priory. The Journal is published quarterly: a year's subscription costs £4.75.

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Table of Contents

Right Thought	
Rev. Master Daishin Morgan, O.B.C.	2
The Buddhist Rosary.	8
Right Meditation	
Rev. Master Jimyo Krasner, O.B.C.	10
Serene Reflection	
Garma C. C. Chang	15
Jūkai 1984	18
Kōans	
Rev. Master Kaizan Esformes, O.B.C.	20
The Value of a Meditation Group	
John Brown, Lay Minister, O.B.C.	27
News	32
Books & Buddhist Supplies	inside cover

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Right Thought

Rev. Master Daishin Morgan, O.B.C.

Right Thought is a subject easy to get lost in if it is confused with metaphysics or philosophy, so I will stick to how Right Thought can be approached and what happens to a person when he finds it. All the sutras and great teachers have made it clear that, since the intellectual mind only deals in concepts, it cannot comprehend That Which Is, the Buddha Nature. The intellect is only a tool whose inherent limitations prevent it from having a true overview of the great work of liberation. However, the intellect, when cleansed of one-sided attachment, is revealed as the True Mind of Buddha so we must not despise or reject it but instead allow it to return to its true place where it becomes one of the skilful means at the disposal of the Buddha Nature.

Right Thought appears when delusive thought is abandoned so our first concern is to see the nature of delusive thought and the harm it causes. When delusive thought is seen without excuses or guilt there arises spontaneously a longing to be free, a wish for enlightenment, which if carefully nurtured grows strong and, in time, strong enough to overcome clinging. Thought conditions what we do and who we are, and is probably the most unrestrained of all human faculties. Greed, hate, and delusion depend upon delusive thought for their continued existence. Before greed is acted upon, thoughts about the desired object run unrestrained; without such thoughts the impulse to greed passes away without harm. The following verses from the opening of the *Dhammapada* make this clear:

1. Mind foreruns all evil conditions, mind is chief, mind-made are they; if one speaks or acts with wicked mind, because of that, pain pursues him, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox.

2. Mind foreruns all good conditions, mind is chief, mind-made are they; if one speaks or acts with pure mind, because of that, happiness follows him, even as the shadow that never leaves.

3. "He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me," the hatred of those who harbour such thoughts is not appeased.

4. "He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me," the hatred of those who do not harbour such thoughts is appeased....

11. In the unreal they imagine the real, in the real they see the unreal; they who feed on wrong thoughts never achieve the real.¹

The mechanism of how delusion feeds upon thought can be further illustrated by examining the mental activity associated with lust. As a consequence of having lusted in the past, an individual will have a predisposition towards it again. This predisposition manifests itself whenever conditions are conducive — and immediately thoughts, dreams, and fantasies jump on the bandwagon in the most unrestrained way unless the gentle discipline of meditation is applied. Because of the karmic predisposition towards lust, we cannot prevent it arising when stimulated; however, we are able to control our minds from building on this predisposition and indulging lust. If the mind is allowed to indulge in lust, then the predisposition is strengthened but, by choosing to leave the train of thought and point ourselves back to meditation, the power of the predisposition is thereby diminished. Obviously, this decision to refrain from mentally indulging lust must be applied whenever the thoughts reappear which they will with regularity until something inside revolts against this destructive tyranny and is prepared to forsake lust. We develop a predisposition towards lust out of the mistaken idea that it is pleasurable, and that in some way it will gratify our

innermost longing. Until we are willing to forgo this delusive pleasure we will not get very far. Once we are prepared to let lustful thoughts subside, we weaken the predisposition until it is finally cleansed.

Most thought consists of mental dialogues, speculations about the future and replays of the past, fantasies of "What if...?" and so on. Such mental activity is so much a part of us that we have difficulty conceiving of life without it. It is this mental activity which maintains the illusion of separation from all that is. Enlightenment is about transcending the selfish mind, and going beyond attachment to the experience of becoming Buddha. We have to be willing for something much more fundamental to take over from the limited selfish mind if we are to even see Buddha. The beginning of Right Thought is the willingness to lay aside useless and destructive thought processes and to choose instead to direct our energy towards letting the mind remain still, so that that which is beyond the self has a chance to get a word in. Great Master Dōgen expresses it thus:

When the Buddha does all and you follow this doing effortlessly and without worrying about it, you gain freedom from suffering and become, yourself, Buddha.²

So long as I believe myself to be in charge and that this body and mind are mine to dispose of as I wish, I can never see Buddha, never mind follow His doing. The delusion of self-importance finds its expression first of all in thought. It is therefore fundamental to control it and embrace the Buddha. This is where philosophy must drop away and we must enter the world of religion.

Our body and mind is just a tool. If the tool believes itself to be the craftsman, only confusion will be created; but if the tool willingly places itself in the craftsman's hands, then a great masterpiece appears that teaches all beings. To achieve the masterpiece, the tool must follow the craftsman's directions absolutely

and immediately. It is the craftsman who makes the masterpiece, not the tool, yet without the tool the truth does not appear. If we think we know best, the work is sadly limited. We must be in no doubt about who the craftsman is — *When the Buddha does all and you follow this doing effortlessly and without worrying about it, you gain freedom from suffering and become, yourself, Buddha.* We should not think we are something separate from the Buddha, and at the same time we should not think we are the Buddha. If we just sit still, the Buddha Nature manifests itself quite naturally. Meditation is the true gateway to enlightenment, and it is also the practical application of Right Thought. When a decision is called for, there is no need for a flutter of ideas, opinions, hopes, and desires, but instead the choice is offered to the craftsman; the tool is willing, therefore the Truth can appear. This is to approach the question in humility with a willingness to do anything, within the Precepts, that is good. The answer to the question arises in meditation and one of the many possibilities feels right and in accord with the Buddha within. The tool is willing to be used and yet, in time, the tool knows itself to be one with the craftsman. Should the tool at any time revert to its old ways, the suffering and confusion return. Right Action appears when we are still — we have no need of anything else. Intellectual theories and philosophy only serve to pacify the irresolute mind that clings to relative knowledge.

Within this stillness, achieved by neither feeding thoughts nor rejecting them but through simply sitting and accepting everything, there yawns a great chasm of fear. Everything we have relied upon in our minds, all the mental bubble gum, is no longer there and a fear suddenly arises that causes us to rush back for refuge to the thoughts once more. Those who have a true commitment try again and again, each time getting a little nearer the edge of the chasm. As this goes on, the meditator learns more and more about himself; there is a rising sense of unworthiness and revulsion at the way he is until finally the desire to drop off all greed,

hate, and delusion becomes greater than his clinging to self; and almost before he knows it, he takes a leap in pure faith over the edge of the chasm. Immediately, he finds himself in the presence of the Buddha, That Which Is is truly seen, and the Buddha Nature realised. Infinite love, compassion, and humility arise with a joy that is inexpressible. This event is of great importance in understanding Right Thought because the meditator now *knows* the Buddha for himself, and he knows that the Buddha must become his only refuge. He has seen through the delusion of self and knows his body is not his own, and that his mind and the Buddha are one. Even this exquisite joy must not be clung to for the ego is not yet fully converted. However, having once seen the Buddha, that knowledge never leaves him provided he keeps up his training. Having been shown the Eternal, the Unborn, the Undying, the meditator experiences a deep yearning to remove all remaining defilements so he can be one with the Buddha for eternity.

Now that the meditator, at least for a moment, has seen things as they truly are, the senses can begin to be purified so that he maintains this vision at all time. While he believed in the delusive notion of the ego, all his perceptions were coloured. Now the world can be seen with the eye of Buddha; sounds that are heard are the voice of Buddha; and all action is the action of a Buddha. But this only continues for as long as the tool is willing to place itself in the craftsman's hand. Right Thought is therefore the thought of Buddha, or the operation of the Buddha Mind. It is available to anyone who is willing to pay the price, but those who are unwilling cannot even conceive of it. There are those who worry that such devotion to the Way of Buddha will stifle all originality and creativity. These people cling to the separate self instead of discovering the True Source of all that is creative. So long as we wish to be creative we create only ego. If we are willing to let the Buddha do all without worrying about it, then there is nowhere for pride to get in, for the masterpiece is none of our doing.

The important point is that thought is notoriously unreliable because of the ego-tinted glass through which the world is seen. Right Thought is to be still and not get caught up in a web of delusive thought, so that we can see the nature of the ego and come to know the great turning around that puts the world back into its true perspective. This world is neither real nor unreal: it is the manifestation of the Buddha Nature, the Unborn, Undying, Indestructible. This cannot be understood with the ordinary mind, but it can be known for certain by the Buddha within each one of us.

* * *

Notes

1. Nārada Thera trans. *The Dhammapada* (London: John Murray, 1954), p. 15 & p. 17.
2. Rev. Rōshi Ji-yu-Kennett, *Zen is Eternal Life* (Emeryville, CA: Dharma Publishing, 1976), p. 164.

* * *

The Buddhist Rosary

Rosaries come in three sizes: one hundred and eight beads, fifty-four beads, and twenty-seven beads. At the base there is either a manji or tomoe which represents the movement of the Spirit within the heart; a pagoda, representing the storehouse of the scriptures which the turning of the rosary causes to be revolved; a fish biting on an iron ball which it can neither swallow nor spit out; or two tassels which represent the world of the opposites which we can transcend by taking refuge in the Three Treasures. (The tassels also suggest the roots of the lotus.) Whatever is at the base of the rosary, it is always a symbol of activity and movement, whether the movement of the heart (the manji or tomoe), the revolving of the scriptures (pagoda), the struggle with the kōan (a fish biting on an iron ball), or the will to train oneself (the tassels). Immediately above this symbol are three beads representing the Three Refuges of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. The divider beads in a rosary are moments of pause for silent reflection, perhaps putting the hands in gasshō while holding the rosary.

Rosaries are often used for the transfer of merit for sick or dying persons, or for any other suitable cause. A person can transfer merit by thinking of the purpose of the recitation while holding the symbol; he recites the Three Homages and then pauses on the large centre spacer for a moment of silent reflection; the name of a Bodhisattva is recited on each bead, with pauses for silent reflection at each divider bead; the recitation of the Three Homages is repeated at the end, and again he brings to mind the purpose of the recitation at the symbol. The following is a typical example of this use: someone who wishes to transfer merit to a dying relative or friend would first hold, for example, the manji while thinking of turning the Wheel of the law by the love in his heart for that person.

He then takes the Three Refuges for that person and for himself, reflecting silently on the centre spacer. If his rosary has twenty-seven beads, he recites *Homage to Kanzeon Bosatsu* on each of the first six beads, meditates silently on the spacer for a moment, recites again *Homage to Kanzeon Bosatsu* on the next fifteen beads, reflects silently on the spacer, and then recites *Homage to Kanzeon Bosatsu* on the last six. He then pauses silently on the centre spacer for thoughtful reflection, again takes the Three Refuges, and pauses on the symbol to think how he can best transfer merit by the movement of his heart. This pattern is followed for all sizes of rosary. Obviously, there are other purposes for which you might wish to transfer merit; perhaps for yourself, or to calm your mind and help keep it from wandering if on a bus, or in other public situations.

A person may also use a rosary to transfer the merit of wisdom to another. On a twenty-seven bead rosary, he recites *Homage to Kanzeon Bosatsu* on the first six beads (transferring Compassion), *Homage to Fugen Bosatsu* on the next fifteen (transferring Love), and *Homage to Monju Bosatsu* on the last six (transferring Wisdom, the child of Compassion and Love). A sincere Buddhist will discover many uses of the rosary for himself as his meditation deepens.

* * *

The Priory shop is now able to offer Buddhist rosaries, thanks to the generous efforts of one of our meditation groups. They are of a simple design, with wooden beads, and two red or blue tassels at the base. We have all three sizes, but you may need to wait a little if you order a 108-bead rosary. The prices are as follows:

27-bead	-	£3.00
54-bead	-	£4.95
108-bead	-	£7.25

All prices include postage.

* * *

Right Meditation

Rev. Master Jimyo Krasner, O.B.C.

Right Meditation is a stillness within which everything flows; a certain knowledge of our unity with the Eternal and with all things. It is the perfume of the lotus, for just as when we offer incense its perfume reaches all corners of the room, so meditation done correctly permeates all corners of the universe. In this way, the benefits of Right Meditation extend to all beings, for truly —

When Shakyamuni was, is and will be enlightened, the whole world and animate things were, are and will be enlightened at the same time, just as the main rope has every branch rope connected with it.¹

We can prove the truth of this statement for ourselves every time we meditate.

It may be difficult in the beginning to truly understand what Right Meditation is. It is easier to describe how to do it. This is actually much more important for by doing it for ourselves it comes to have true meaning in our life. So the beginning meditator is told to just sit still, with an alert and bright attitude of mind, allowing thoughts, perceptions, and ideas to arise and pass naturally. He or she is shown certain positions of the body to use for, since the body and mind are one, it is useful to sit upright, to be alert but relaxed and to keep the eyes open. One then just sits 'neither trying to think nor trying not to think; just sitting with no deliberate thought is the important aspect of Zazen.'²

It is hard for many people to have the faith to do this. For while it appears easy when considered superficially, what is really meant is we must not cling to

anything which arises whether thoughts, feelings, ideas, or visions; whether apparently positive or negative; whether states of body or mind — all of these are transitory. Right Meditation is beyond all that we imagine or can conceive of, while embracing and encompassing all within itself.

In the beginning, after learning to meditate most people spend some time just overcoming their initial physical and mental discomforts. During this stage, which may last for quite a long time, they follow Zen Master Dōgen's instructions — they try to just sit, to let thoughts come and go, to discipline an overactive mind. Interestingly, it is *after* this stage, when they become better at this, that problems arise for it is obvious in the beginning that, while meditation is difficult, there is much further to go. Later, when one begins to make some progress, there may be a tendency to mistake the signposts pointing to the goal for the goal itself. It is during these times we must remember that Right Meditation is beyond all states of body and mind, that the Zen trainee is always going on, always *becoming* Buddha.

For instance, it is quite common for someone who has made some progress in spiritual training to start to find within himself a spiritual strength he never had before. He finds he can sit like a rock no matter what arises; the pains and distracting thoughts of yesterday are no longer a problem; he just sits immovably. He feels sure he has found the 'Iron Man' of Zen. This, he is certain, must be Right Meditation, but it is not. It is progress, a step along the path, but there is much further to go.

Other people find that as they train and gradually deepen their meditation they begin to see themselves more clearly. Strong emotions and old memories arise clearly in their meditation and are seen as things from which much can be learned. They begin to see how to open up to these aspects of themselves, to know themselves more fully, and to deal with the consequences of past actions. This cleansing of karma is indeed an

important part of training, producing positive results both for oneself and others. But it is not, in and of itself, Right Meditation. There is more than this.

Others find states of peace and joy becoming a part of their meditation. It becomes a pleasure to sit, no longer a chore as it often was earlier. They become calmer, more competent in everyday activities; their relationships with others improve. This is fine, but again, by itself, it is not Right Meditation.

Most people encounter all of the above states, and others, at various stages in their training. The important thing is to accept them along with everything else which arises, learn from them, then let them go and go on deeper. For Right Meditation is none of these states although it includes all of them and many more. They are all simply steps along the path, but not the end of the road. There are times when one sits like an Iron Man, and times for searching the heart and cleansing past karma. There are moments of peace and joy and tranquillity, and times of hell and darkness and aridity. Right Meditation is to accept all of these but to cling to none, knowing that the Eternal is to be found within all of them. Right Meditation is not a state of body or mind, being beyond all states of body and mind. It is to swim with the flow of the current, but not to try to dam up the stream. It is to turn the Wheel of the Dharma, but not to try to hold the Wheel within one's grasp; to do the Will of the Eternal, but not demand to sit upon His right hand. Right Meditation is as a young tree whose roots extend deep into the soil of the world while its branches bend with the wind as they grow upwards to the Buddha Land. Right Meditation, when truly done, enables us to fulfil our purpose for living which is to show the Eternal in our daily life. We do this by following the steps of the Noble Eightfold Path — *this* is the path to the Eternal.

Right Meditation is found by sitting in Zazen, but is much much more than sitting in front of a wall. It is found when one sees the necessity of *giving up everything*. This 'giving up' has little to do with giving away

money or material possessions: it means giving up attachment to all the things one considers as more important than finding the Eternal, for these are the things that separate us from Him. It is therefore to make spiritual training the *priority* of one's life. This renunciation includes giving up the desire for spiritual experiences or for achieving results through one's meditation, for spiritual grasping is as much of a hindrance as material attachments. We must just sit like a fool, *neither trying to think nor trying not to think*. And trust that by this means we will come in time to know the truth and joy of Meister Eckhart's words: 'And a man shall be free, and as pure as the day prior to his conception in his mother's womb, when he wants nothing, has nothing, and knows nothing.' Zen Master Ryokan describes it like this:

Soft ease and riches are not mine
Nor honour such as earth can give.
My wants are simple;
And my hands touch heaven as I dream and live
Careless of praise or hurt.
Though strife and cruel human need
Beat down my soul at times
And I appear forlorn, my heart is clear,
Dipped in the exquisite light
Of a content that is divine.³

When we let go of all the desires, cravings, opinions and so forth, it is like cleansing the dross from the system. When we are empty of everything, there is room for the Eternal and 'the Truth enters into us and we enter into the Truth' — this is the fullest emptiness one can know. Like the best of marriages, it is a relationship which lasts and grows, both in good and bad times, no matter what the world may hurl at it, for it is cemented in Eternity — this is Right Meditation. And still it is something any of us can do, for it is to just sit, neither trying to think nor trying not to think. The whole of Right Meditation is contained in this; all that is required is the faith and will to do Zazen:

...look inwards and advance directly along the road that leads to the Mind, respect those who have reached the goal of goallessness, become one with the wisdom of the Buddhas, Transmit the wisdom of the Ancestors. If you do these things for some time you will become as herein described and then the treasure house will open naturally and you will enjoy it fully.⁴

* * *

Notes

1. *Zen is Eternal Life*, p. 200.
2. Dōgen Zenji, 'Zazen Rules,' *Zen Meditation* (Mount Shasta, CA: Shasta Abbey Press, 1980), p. 5.
3. From Jacob Fischer trans. and ed. *Dewdrops on a Lotus Leaf* (Tokyo: Kenkyusha Publishing Company.)
4. 'Zazen Rules,' *Zen Meditation*, p. 6.

* * *

Serene Reflection

Garma C. C. Chang

(The following extract from *The Practice of Zen* by Garma C. C. Chang, first published in 1959 by Rider & Company, is reprinted here with permission. Unfortunately, this book is now out of print.)

PRACTISING ZEN THROUGH OBSERVING ONE'S MIND IN TRANQUILLITY.

The Zen practice of the Tsao Tung school (J. Sōtō) can be summed up in these two words: 'serene reflection' (Chinese: *mo chao*). This is clearly shown in the poem from the *Notes on Serene Reflection* by the famous Zen Master, Hung Chih, of the Tsao Tung school (J. Wanshi Shokaku, 1091-1157):

Silently and serenely one forgets all words;
Clearly and vividly *That* appears before him.
When one realizes it, it is vast and without edges;
In its essence, one is clearly aware.
Singularly reflecting is this bright awareness.
Full of wonder is this pure reflection.
Dew and the moon,
Stars and streams,
Snow on pine trees,
And clouds hovering on the mountain peaks —
From darkness, they all become glowingly bright;
From obscurity, they all turn to resplendent light.
Infinite wonder permeates this serenity;
In this Reflection all intentional efforts vanish.
Serenity is the final word of all teachings;
Reflection is the response to all manifestations.
Devoid of any effort,
This response is natural and spontaneous.

Disharmony will arise
If in reflection there is no serenity;
All will become wasteful and secondary
If in serenity there is no reflection.
The Truth of serene reflection
Is perfect and complete.

Oh look! The hundred rivers flow
In tumbling torrents
To the great ocean!

Without some explanations and comments on this poem, the meaning of 'serene reflection' may still be enigmatic to many readers. The Chinese word, *mo*, means 'silent' or 'serene'; *chao* means 'to reflect' or 'to observe.' *Mo chao* may thus be translated as 'serene reflection' or 'serene observation.' But both the 'serene' and the 'reflection' have special meanings here and should not be understood in their common connotations. The meaning of 'serene' goes much deeper than mere 'calmness' or 'quietude'; it implies transcendence over all words and thoughts, denoting a state of 'beyond,' of pervasive peace. The meaning of 'reflection' likewise goes much deeper than its ordinary sense of 'contemplation of a problem or an idea.' It has no savour of mental activity or of contemplative thought, but is a mirror-like clear awareness, ever-illuminating and bright in its pure self-experience. To speak even more concisely, 'serene' means the tranquillity of no-thought (Chinese: *wu nien*) and 'reflection' means vivid and clear awareness. Therefore, serene reflection is *clear awareness in the tranquillity of no-thought*. This is what the *Diamond Sutra* means by 'not dwelling on any object, yet the mind arises.' The great problem here is, how to put one's mind *into* such a state? To do so requires verbal instruction and special training at the hands of a teacher. The 'wisdom eye' of the disciple must first be opened, otherwise he will never know how to bring his mind to the state of serene reflection. If one knows how to practise this meditation, one has already accomplished something in Zen. The uninitiated never know how to do this work. This serene

reflection meditation of the Tsao Tung sect, therefore, is not an ordinary exercise of quietism or stillness. It is the meditation of Zen, of *Prajnaparamita*.¹ Careful study of the preceding poem will show that the intuitive and transcendental 'Zen elements' are unmistakably there....

* * *

Notes

1. 'The Perfection of Wisdom.' It also refers to the Great Wisdom Scriptures of which the best known and most widely revered is the Scripture of Great Wisdom, (also known as the Heart Scripture). Ed.

* * *

The Ten Precepts Meeting - Jūkai 1984



The Eternal does not depend on anything, and yet at the same time, without our willingness to turn around, without our willingness to meet the Eternal, It does not manifest freely in us; and yet It does not depend upon us. Always we have the Buddha Nature. The only thing that matters is the Eternal. It is only when we have this view of the world that we begin to get things straight. Before then everything is topsy-turvy. To straighten out our perception of the world, we have to begin with ourselves; we have to be willing to look, to face the Buddha within ourselves. We have to be willing to face the Buddha in whatever form he or she appears...

Rev. Master Daishin Morgan: Jūkai lecture.



All activity is permeated with pure Zazen



KŌANS

Rev. Master Kaizan Esformes, O.B.C.

(This article first appeared in the Journal of Shasta Abbey, September-October 1983, and is reprinted here with the author's permission.)

Two of the main schools of Buddhism that have survived in Japan are the Rinzai and the Serene Reflection (Sōtō) schools. As they have coexisted side by side over the centuries, it is unfortunate that in the minds of some there has grown between them something of a rivalry, with each extolling the virtues of their system while pointing out the faults of the other. One of the main differences that has sprung up between them is the use of kōans.

In Rinzai, a kōan (or spiritual problem) is given to a student by his master and he attempts with great effort and tension to penetrate into the true spiritual meaning of the seemingly senseless situation that the kōan presents. Often he is struck with the kyosaku while in meditation so that he will keep up a level of intensity and concentration while sitting. This often results in an awakening to one's True Nature quite early in training, and this early awakening is much desired in the Rinzai system. An interesting historical point is that Daie Sōkō, a 12th century Chinese Rinzai master who instituted the systematic use of kōans, did so at a time when Kublai Khan was invading China. The monks and laity came to him wanting the certainty derived from deep spiritual experience as soon as possible, for they never knew when they might be murdered by Mongol invaders. Daie Sōkō did not feel there was time for the less hurried and less forceful training of the Serene Reflection school, in which more time often elapses before the certainty is reached.

In the Serene Reflection school, the master usually does not select a kōan for the student. Instead, one discovers one's own natural kōan within themeless meditation, *serene reflection (Zazen)*, and training in everyday life. The kōan has at its root suffering and the desire to solve it gradually increases as we see the suffering we and others experience because one's own kōan remains unsolved. One penetrates the kōan on the deepest level without the external pressure of being struck with the kyosaku and the need to formally present an answer to the master, or the internal pressure created by the high level of tension and concentration employed in Rinzai meditation.

These differences have sparked some Rinzai students to complain that those in the Serene Reflection school are slow to achieve spiritual awakening, thereby wasting precious time; they accept mediocre effort and therefore do not have as high a standard. Then there are those of the Serene Reflection school who claim that the Rinzai students, with their 'get results quick' method, attain to a superficial understanding only for their experience is akin to that of a hot-house plant which cannot survive in the normal world; and though it may take longer for those of the Serene Reflection school to experience a spiritual awakening, they have in the process grown to understand themselves in much more detail, and so their experience is a much more integral and deep-rooted part of their lives. This, in a nutshell, is the rivalry that developed in China and then continued in Japan. I thought I would attempt to point out the Fundamental Truth that underlies both schools for when we all bow with reverence and gratitude to the Highest Truth, these differences evaporate like morning dew before the hot, summer sun. Different people may do better with one form of practice than with another, just as different flowers flourish in varying climates, each according to its own needs.

From the outset I must admit that I have only a limited knowledge of the Rinzai system. Still, I would like to describe in very general terms the way in which

kōans are used, in the faith that even a little knowledge gained in meditation will bridge many gaps where practical details are unknown. If my understanding is incorrect, I would like to apologise for any misrepresentation, and I would appreciate a letter from any knowledgeable Rinzai student pointing out where I am mistaken.

As I mentioned earlier, The Rinzai master gives his student a kōan, and the student uses all his energy to penetrate the kōan to its deepest spiritual level, and then presents his answer to the master. Any answer that does not reflect deep spiritual experience is rejected by the master, and the student must delve once again into his meditation with greater effort. Perhaps at this point an example might clarify the exercise. One kōan is 'What is the sound of one hand clapping?' This illustrates the dilemma one faces when trying to penetrate a kōan, for on the level of ordinary thought the kōan makes no sense whatsoever. In fact, kōans are often formulated in such a way that any answer that can be thought of by the discriminatory, dualistic mind is virtually impossible to find, so that from the outset, one is left with no alternative but to search within the depths of meditation. The master points out that there are tools such as faith, perseverance, vigour, and non-attachment, but the student must dig for himself until he experiences the unity of the great Dharmakaya wherein the answer to his kōan lies. When one experiences this, one solves the kōan, if only for that moment, and the master may confirm that this has occurred.

But a good master will spur us on to make this unity our normal everyday experience. One moment may possess all of eternity, but if that moment is viewed from a dualistic standpoint it becomes a moment that has a beginning and an end. Therefore, in the hope that the student will learn to find the depths of meditation with greater and greater ease, and dwell therein more and more, he is given one kōan after another. Over time, as each kōan is solved he is less and less ensnared by the guiles of the self which are our personal karmic inheritance of dualistic thinking and living.

The last of the Rinzai kōans to be given are the Precepts, for to live within the harmony and unity of the Precepts is the ideal of the Buddhist life. To live within the Precepts without being ensnared by dualistic thinking of good and evil is to understand that the Precepts are actually a description of the Dharmakaya. To make the Precepts permeate every fibre of one's being is to dwell within the Dharmakaya, for the two are one and the same thing. This is why, I believe, the Precepts are the last of the Rinzai kōans to be given: while the other kōans bring one to the experience of satori, the Precepts also connect one in the most intimate way with everyday life. They are at once a code for living everyday life in such a way that one does not accumulate karma and, at the same time, when understood on their deepest spiritual level, they are utterly one with the Dharmakaya. To experience them in this way is most delightful. When we study like this, we realise that training and enlightenment are one, and that samsara and Nirvana are separated only by our delusive thinking.

But I have jumped ahead of myself — first, I would like to explain the use of what is called 'the kōan of everyday life' in the Serene Reflection school. Along with formal, seated meditation, the kōan of everyday life is the staple of students of the Serene Reflection school and it boils down to nothing other than following the Precepts and solving for oneself the kōan presented by the Precepts. By this, I do not mean to suggest that the student of the Serene Reflection school is as advanced in his training when he first begins as the Rinzai student is after many years of kōan study. The Precepts are kaleidoscopic in their depth and they allow a person to learn from them at whatever stage of training he may be in. They are like an elevator that goes from the basement to the 120th floor. One can get on at any level, yet it is still the same elevator.

In the early stages, however, it is often not understood how following the Precepts has any direct bearing on realising one's True Nature. They seem to deal exclusively with the world of duality: one should do this,

one should not do that. The experience of satori, enlightenment, becoming one with the Dharmakaya or the Eternal, on the other hand, is said to be beyond all opposites. Therefore, it is natural to wonder about this. But there is, in fact, an explanation. We all possess the Buddha Nature; we are inherently not separate from the Dharmakaya nor from all things within the universe. But through the accumulation of karma we function under the delusion that we are indeed separate from everything else, and that we are only an individual existence. We feel that we are in this body and that everything else is 'out there.' By following the Precepts, we wear away at this delusion just as flowing water eventually wears down a rock. Through following the Precepts we feel less and less antagonistic towards, and alienated from, our surroundings. In time we feel more in tune with those around us, more willing to give up our selfish desires and consider the point of view of another. As the layers of delusive thinking (which set up the opposites of self vs. other) begin to dissolve, we become more ripe to experience our complete and absolute oneness with all things within the universe. This oneness is neither self nor other, but is the Dharmakaya itself.

At this point, an example may be helpful. Consider the Precept 'Do not be proud of yourself and devalue others.' In working on this Precept in daily life, unaware of our True Nature, we find that the walls that separate ourselves from others become thinner and thinner. Through following this Precept, the dualistic, selfish thinking which separates us from knowing our Buddha Nature dissolves and eventually we realise what is very beautifully stated in the *Kyōjūkaimon* (*Giving and Receiving the Teaching of the Precepts*):

Every Buddha and every Ancestor realises that he is the same as the limitless sky and as great as the universe. When they realise their true body there is nothing within or without; when they realise their true body they are nowhere more upon the earth.¹

In other words, we have no 'self,' nor is there a 'self' of others, there is only the vast, limitless Dharmakaya. So who is there to be proud and who is there to devalue? Similarly, all of the Precepts open us up to realising 'no-self,' the limitless Dharmakaya.

Herein, we can see that the student of the Serene Reflection school is in exactly the same position with his kōan of the Precepts as the Rinzai student is with the kōan given to him by his master. Both are forced to abandon the discriminatory mind and seek the answer within the depths of meditation, within the purity of heart which is pointed to by the Precepts. In so doing, the untenable situation our dualistic thinking places us in is supplanted by the kaleidoscopic Buddha Mind. Just as the Rinzai student only solves the kōan for the time that he truly transcends dualistic thinking, so it is with those of the Serene Reflection school: the kōan presented by the Precepts is truly solved only for the time that one experiences the Precepts on their deepest level. This doesn't mean that training and enlightenment are different, and that we are trying to achieve some supernormal state of mind. What it does mean is that just because we may perceive our essential unity with the Dharmakaya and all things from time to time, there is still karma to cleanse before this spiritual vision becomes our normal, everyday sight.

So the Rinzai trainee goes from one kōan to the next, constantly trying to realise the Highest Truth, and those of the Serene Reflection school watch with vigilance for any way in which they might break the Precepts so that they may cleanse the karma that separates them from the Highest Truth. For all of us, the kōan is constantly unfolding. The snares of self can appear at any time, no matter how many kōans one has solved. One can still break the Precepts, no matter how many times one has seen into their true essence. I believe that, as one realises the Dharmakaya time and time again in the kōan system, one grows to understand that the Precepts are the Way of the Dharmakaya, and so they must be adhered to if one is to realise one's essential unity with It as the normal

experience. I feel this is why the Precepts are the last of the Rinzai kōans. Those of the Serene Reflection school follow the Precepts and, as the Precepts permeate every fibre of their being, they realise their essential unity with the Dharmakaya. At this level of practice, which is the level we should all be striving for, the two schools become harder and harder to distinguish.

Buddhism has been transplanted to the West and is like a young sapling that can thrive in its new soil. The potential for it to survive and be healthy is as undeniable as the Buddha Nature, but karma can still be made. The tree has taken root and it is our choice whether or not it will flourish or become diseased. To experience a spiritual awakening once is not enough: this is a trap that anyone of any school can fall into. We must all work to leave behind dualistic thinking, however it may manifest, and bow eternally to the Highest Truth.

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Notes

1. Great Master Keizan, *Kyōjūkaimon*, with commentary by Rev. Rōshi Jiyu-Kennett (Shasta Abbey Press, 1977), p. 11.

* * *

The Value of a Meditation Group

John Brown, Lay Minister, O.B.C.

Perhaps the hardest thing for a lay trainee to understand fully is Dōgen's statement in *Zazen Rules*: *to live by Zen is the same as to live an ordinary daily life*. When we go to the monastery we see what looks like a far from ordinary way of doing things and, if we are at all serious about taking Zen practice with us into the world, we are most likely to look for ways of changing the pattern of our daily lives so that our time away from the monastery will be as much as possible like our time within it. This is no bad thing, provided it does not make us mistake the point of what Dōgen is saying. Just as training and enlightenment are identical, so we can find that if we train hard, the ordinary, everyday world we live in is indeed the Buddha Land. Since this is so, how are we to train in our daily lives if our path at the moment is not that of a monk? Simply, we must turn everything we do into an offering to the Lord of the House.

Since the majority of people in the world do not appear to be training in the same way as us, it is easy to find that the good intention we came home from the retreat with is being eroded throughout the course of our daily life. How can we shore up our practice and give ourselves spiritual succour? Of the many things that can help us maintain the strength of our daily Zazen practice and our deep vow to live by the Precepts of the Buddhas is regularly sitting with others who are similarly persuaded.

At various times in my training I have experienced the full gamut of possibilities in this respect. I have lived in towns where there were no other Buddhists visible; where the handful who lived within a radius of 50

miles could get together only infrequently; and in one remarkable city where other keen trainees had established a meditation group which eventually met two evenings and three mornings a week, with a monthly potluck dinner together thrown in. So let me make one thing clear. Let no one use as an excuse for the failure to train the fact that they are living in isolation with few Zen trainees around. I did not say the opportunity to train with others was absolutely essential (for from a spiritual point of view not any one thing is truly vital) but it certainly offers strong support to the Zen trainee to be able to sit with friends once a week or more.

At the Cirencester Zen Group we sit together once a week, at the same time every week. This is important, because it means social engagements and business meetings can be safely planned well in advance with a minimum of disruption to the pattern of shared sitting. For us, a Wednesday night is the best. We gather at my house for it is possible here to have a suitable room and the necessary privacy and quiet; this is about 8.00, and we begin the formal part of the evening at 8.15. We have a room set aside for us, but since it is not available as a permanent Zendō (the house is not large enough for this), for me the evening begins at about 7.30 when I set up the altar, roll out the carpet, and set out the cushions, scripture books, and so on. This is, for me, an important part of the meditation evening. Sometimes I feel rushed, and must remind myself to take the necessary care and pay attention to the details of cleanliness, order, and respect for the room and the altar. All these add up to meditation in activity and are the source of useful insights into the way of training in the world. The other members of the group are sometimes able to assist and have this opportunity for learning also.

We begin the formal part of the evening with the recitation of *Zazen Rules*. We are fortunate to have a small gong, a signal bell, and other useful items, but simple wooden clappers are quite adequate for beginning the recitation of the scripture if no bell is available. After

reciting the Three Homages at the end of Evening Service, we turn round in our seats to face the wall and do Zazen for about twenty minutes; we chose this as a sensible length as new members of the group might find a longer period difficult to manage. It also makes the point that a few minutes of Zazen is highly beneficial, and it is not essential to sit for the same periods as we do at the Priory; also, it is often simply not practical for people at home to sit for half an hour on the other days of the week — sometimes five or ten minutes is the most that can be done if we have a busy schedule and many responsibilities. Our short meditation period emphasises that there is nothing wrong with this, and that it's good to sit for even five minutes rather than to say to oneself "There is no point in sitting today since I cannot manage the full half hour." The Buddhas and Ancestors do not count time as we do. Even one minute can be of tremendous value since its message is the same as that of a longer period: we are turning towards That Which Is and making an offering of ourselves for the benefit of ourselves and others.

After *Kinhin* (walking meditation) and another, slightly longer Zazen period, we sing Vespers. This is something we only started doing after everyone had had a chance to listen to the Scriptures and Ceremonies tape at home as this seemed a wise precaution at the time. It is a very beautiful way to end the sitting in the meditation hall, and then we quietly leave the room and make our way down to the ground floor for some tea and biscuits, and a chat.

Our conversation is not necessarily related to our training. Indeed, it is really better that we do not discuss spiritual matters as this can lead to confusion and the passing on of half-truths. The Priory is only a phone call or a letter away if anyone needs help or advice. This seems to be the most natural channel of communication for us since the regular group members have been coming for a long time, and have been on retreats at Throssel Hole Priory and at local retreats run under the Priory's direction. The general sort of questions which are the province of a Lay Minister, such as those about

the physical side of sitting and legs going to sleep, and the like, have now tended to answer themselves and we relate as old and trusted friends as much as fellow trainees. In the informal tea we have the opportunity to carry with us our Zazen practice, seeing again how to take our training into a social context. It is important to be sensitive to one another, to listen and to act from the Precepts, but this does not prevent us from having a relaxed time.

One of our members drives the forty-odd miles from Bath to attend the meeting and needs to get off in good time, so we are usually through by 10.00 pm. Then it is time to return the Buddha Statue to its normal place on the private altar in my bedroom, to roll up the carpet, and to put away the gong where the children cannot damage it in their inquisitiveness. Thus, the usual weekly meeting is concluded.

In addition to our weekly meetings for Zazen, we also have occasional meetings to listen to a tape by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett. A weekend evening seems most suitable for this, and it is very pleasant to make this the occasion for an informal meal together. This can be a potluck for which everyone brings a dish and, in my experience, such meals are very successful because they give everybody the chance to contribute; this reinforces the group feeling and strengthens our sense of fellowship.

Each time we meet we cannot help but hold out to one another our faith, and this very act strengthens our own faith and that of others. There is no way that training can be done without its having an impact on those around us and, seen clearly, this is just the doing of the Buddhas and Ancestors. However, when we live in a world that seems indifferent, we sometimes cannot see the benefits we bring to ourselves and others, and it is easy to feel we are making no progress in Zazen, and should perhaps give it up. In fact, our sense of progress is a delusion since training is already enlightenment and, in truth, no more is needed but our sincerity. But we

can easily lose sight of this if we are not still and when we judge our practice with the worldly mind.

A meditation group can therefore strengthen our training in the world and give a weekly focus to our practice so that, no matter how little we may have managed to sit in the week since we last met, we can again bring our training into line with our true wish: we can rededicate ourselves to a life watched over by the Precepts of the Buddhas. This is of immense value and should not be underestimated. I said earlier that such support is not absolutely essential to training (and in my experience it is possible to keep up one's practice despite being apparently alone and assailed by the world) but who in their right mind would choose to battle on alone if given the opportunity to join and regularly attend a meditation group?

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There are many groups around the country who follow the practice and direction of Throssel Hole Priory; these are listed below with the name and phone number of the person to contact for further details:

Birmingham:	Vajira Bailey (021) 429.4080
Bournemouth:	Maureen Henderson (0202) 27728
Buckingham:	Hilaire & Lesley MacCarthy (0280) 813962
Chesterfield:	Neil Dunbar (0246) 206827
Cirencester:	John Brown (0285) 66007
Dublin:	Eugene Kelly, Dublin 966509
Edinburgh:	Rawdon Goodier (031) 667.5870
Exeter:	Richard Harvey (0392) 36480
Hull:	John & Brenda Watkins (0482) 859611
Lancaster:	Paul Taylor (0524) 34031
Leeds:	Pauline Storie (0532) 782464
London:	Jan Crookall-Greening 01.354.2412
Newcastle:	Dave Hurcombe (0632) 763907 (Tyneside)
Southsea:	Peter Lavin (0705) 754490
Stoke-on Trent:	John Forse (0782) 657851
Tain (Scotland)	Linda Jones (0862) 4406

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NEWS

Monastic events: In March, Rev. Master Mokugen Kublicki arrived from Shasta Abbey for a temporary stay at the Priory. We are delighted to have another Senior monk training with us, even if for only a short time.

The Priory was closed to lay visitors from May 23-27 for a monks' sesshin. Rev. Teacher Myōhō Harris from Exeter joined the community for this week of concentrated meditation and practice. During the sesshin, Rev. Master Daishin lectured in the Zendō on selected chapters from the *Denkōroku* by Great Master Keizan. At the end of a very beneficial week, Rev. Master Daishin announced that Rev. Master Jimyo Krasner was now the Vice-Abbot of Throssel Hole Priory and that Rev. Edmund Cluett was to be the next Chief Junior monk. (It is ten years since the last Chief Junior at the Priory so this marks an important step in our monastic history.) The Chief Junior's Installation Ceremony (*Nyudo-no-hai*) took place on May 30. Our warmest congratulations go to both Rev. Master Jimyo and our new Chief Junior, Rev. Edmund: *We pray that this priestly family may prosper and all misfortune cease.*

On Sunday, June 3, we celebrated Keizan Day. Great Master Keizan was the founder of Sōji-ji, one of the two head temples of the Sōtō school in Japan; he is often referred to as the 'mother' of Sōtō Zen, Dōgen being the 'father.' We quote below the Offertory recited at the end of the ceremony:

The Dharma Body of the Buddha cannot be seen so long as one is within duality for it is beyond birth and death, filling all things. Out of compassion for all living things, the Buddha appeared in the form and figure of a

human being; for this great act we bow in gratitude and pray that we may be able to illuminate our minds from delusion. * On this third day of June we commemorate the death of Great Master Keizan Jōkin. We are gathered here to offer incense, flowers, candles, cakes, fruit, tea and the merits of the recitation of the *Sandokai*, *Most Excellent Mirror - Samadhi*, and the *Adoration of the Buddha's Relics* out of gratitude for his Great Compassion. * Although he was the possessor of many attributes, he realised that they were not the True, Shining Treasure and were utterly valueless so he left behind worldly things and began monastic training. From early childhood he sought to overcome self by valiantly subduing his terrible temper, thus turning his back upon anger for ever by converting it into compassion for those for whom he had formerly felt hatred and contempt. By doing this, he shows all of us the way to emulate Avalokiteswara Bodhisattva. He sought to explain the Truth to all by making a ceremony of everyday life so that every action, whether a seemingly ceremonial or worldly one, should have a heavenly meaning. It is to him we give our thanks for so much of the ceremonial that we practise to this day. When we think wholeheartedly of the merit of his actions, we see that it has illuminated eight hundred autumns and still warmly embraces his uncountable family in the Dharma. Just as one branch of a tree can produce five flowers, so his Transmission has flowered and its perfume fills countless places in which Buddhist training is being truly undergone.

(At this point * all turn and bow to the altar.)

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Jūkai 1984: (See centre pages) Twenty-one guests attended Jūkai this year, April 16-22, which was blessed with fine weather. The following people received Lay Ordination: Peter Ferguson, Ayse Kartal, Peter Vallance, Pat Ki, Duncan Kennedy, Stephen Parry, and Ted Fullick. [On May 19, Mrs Liselotte Schaefer, an elderly congregation member from Horsham, Sussex, received the Precepts from Rev. Master Daishin at a ceremony in her home.] We welcome all these newly-ordained trainees into the Buddhist family, and wish them every success in their training.

Lay Ministry News: During the Jūkai sesshin, Pauline Storie, Dave Hurcombe and Julia Langley received their Lay Minister's certificates and rhakksus after successfully completing the formal training period; we wish them well in the future and pray that their excellent efforts continue.

Public Talk: On March 21, Rev. Master Daishin Morgan gave a well-attended talk at the Queen's Hall, Hexham. The audience was genuinely interested and positive and there was much informal discussion afterwards. It is very important that we let our friends and neighbours know what we believe in and practise; only with mutual understanding and respect can we live together in harmony, and without suspicion.

Funerals: Rev. Master Jimyo Krasner was the Celebrant at the funeral of Kee Long Voong, a Vietnamese woman who died on April 23 1984. The ceremony was requested by the dead woman's relatives and took place in Grantham, Lincs. On April 30, Rev. Master Daishin conducted a funeral for Ada Ethel Brady:

When we think sincerely we find that birth and death are cyclic as are cold and heat. Now this one who is newly dead has realised that everything is transient; that true peace is in quietude.

Wesak Celebration: The Buddhist Society, along with the Chithurst Forest Monastery, held a Wesak Celebration at the Camden Centre, London, on May 20. Rev. Master Daishin

and Rev. Master Jimyo attended in response to the kind invitation of the organisers.

Building News: Work on the new meditation hall is proceeding on schedule (so far we have been very lucky with the weather). We have finished the masonry on the north gable-end and work continues on the apse and south gable-end. This will be finished very soon and completes the masonry work needed before the main roof can be built. The next phase of the building is to put in a temporary floor so we can make the roof trusses. The wood for the roof has been ordered and should arrive any time; the roofing felt, skylights, and slates are already 'on site' (a fine use here of the builder's patois) so we are geared up to finish the roof before the winter sets in. Once the shell is finished we will need to raise more money to complete the interior. In addition to the main building, the new car park has been levelled and filled with stone, and is now in use; also, we have started to landscape the area around the main gate.

Journal: We have had to increase some of our foreign subscriptions. The new rates are as follows:

Surface - £4.95 : Europe-Air - £6.10 a year
(Other countries-Air - rate remains £6.75)

Guest Department: Monks from the Priory have recently led successful retreats in Leeds, Lancaster, Edinburgh, and Holland. Our weekend retreats and sesshins continue to be well supported and you should book early to make sure of a place. The summer sesshin is already fully booked, but people can still apply to go on a waiting list in case of a cancellation.

At the Priory we keep a list of those who would like to meditate with others in their area; if you would like your name and phone number added to this list, please write to the Guestmaster. Also, if anyone can regularly offer lifts to others when they are coming up here (sharing expenses), please let us know, as this can be of great help to some people.

Garden: Thanks to a mild spring, seeds could be sown early this year and the garden is thriving. We have just enjoyed our first taste of home-grown rhubarb for several years. (The plants were kindly donated to us). We should also have a bumper crop of strawberries — if the birds don't beat us to it! Everything else is growing well and summer visitors to the Priory can look forward to freshly-picked vegetables and fruit throughout the next few months.

Donations: We are most grateful for donations of silk flowers and a Buddha statue; garden tools, boots, and seeds; clothes, kitchen spatulas, a jug, coat-hangers, a pestle and mortar, and a timer-switch; eggs, chutney, vegetables and honey; and sweets, chocolate, tea, coffee, marmalade and jam.

Begging Bowl: The kitchen could still use stainless steel pots and bowls and also handcream; workgloves are always needed; the garden requests garden tools, plant food, netting for protecting our delicious raspberries and strawberries, and a compost grinder; good quality drawing paper for publicity work etc., fancy material (such as brocade), and sewing thread, especially black, white, brown and beige, and pins, snaps, hooks and eyes etc.

Corrections: In the last issue of the Journal we gave the wrong STD code for Carrshield — it should have been 049 85. Also, please note that *Zen As Eternal Life* is a 6 tape series of lectures and not a 4 tape series as it was incorrectly stated. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

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BOOKS & BUDDHIST SUPPLIES

CORRECTION

The price list sent out with the last issue of the Journal stated that the tape series *Zen As Eternal Life* was a 4 tape series; this should have said 6 tapes. £27.30.

DISCONTINUED

Zen As Eternal Life is unfortunately out-of-print. A new edition is in preparation but the publication date has not yet been set. We still have some copies of *Flowing Water by the River* at the close-out price of £3.50.

NEW ITEMS

Rosaries: We can now sell Buddhist rosaries at a very reasonable price. The rosaries are made with wooden beads and have two blue or red tassels at the base. Please see the article in this issue describing the uses of a Buddhist rosary.

27 bead - £3.00. 54 bead - £4.95. 108 bead - £7.25.

Bodhisattva Medallions: A delicate and attractive 1" olden Bodhisattva comes in a small red and gold brocade bag; it is a useful religious object to carry in a purse, wallet, or rosary case, as a constant reminder of one's original vow to train the self. £1.75.

REMINDEES

Manual of Buddhism by Maha Nārada Thera. A concise and comprehensive introduction to the Buddha's life and teachings. Highly recommended. Only £1.75.

Calligraphies: Inspiring quotations from Great Masters Ōgen and Keizan and other sources, beautifully calligraphed by monks at Shasta Abbey. A list of calligraphies is available free on request.

Large - 70p

Small - 50p

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